

IV. STAFFING AND STAFF ROLES

Some One-Stop Centers in this study indicated that initially their desire was to build a Center that would be “easy to use,” so that services could be accessed with little staff assistance. Their original intent or goal was thus to develop a strong self-service infrastructure that would be minimally staff intensive. Several Centers expressed that having a customer-friendly self-service system of this sort would enable the One-Stop system to provide a baseline set of services to universal customers, even when local workforce development resources dwindle.

Yet most of the Centers in this study indicated that, over time, their vision around the role of staff in a self-service environment changed significantly. During the initial phases of One-Stop planning and implementation, several staff at the state and local levels believed that self-services could largely be delivered as a stand-alone feature—it was thought that customers would access self-services on their own and would require little staff assistance. However, individuals using the Resource Room have varying levels of comfort, knowledge, and experience with self-service tools and resources. Thus, in order to effectively facilitate access to self-services, many Centers have discovered that customer service staff must be available in the Resource Room to provide an orientation to self-service resources and to assist customers on an ongoing basis. In fact, at some of the Centers we visited, job seeker customers using the Resource Room indicated that staff members were the greatest resource at the Center.

Centers came to see that customers need staff assistance to be able to use Resource Rooms effectively.

STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS IN THE RESOURCE ROOM

The One-Stop Centers in this study used different approaches to staffing the Resource Room and other self-service areas. Some Centers provide full-time customer service representatives in the Resource Room, whose primary responsibilities include maintaining the self-service tools and resources and assisting customers. At other Centers, staff members from different programs provide customer service in the Resource Room on a rotating basis or on an “on-call” basis, as they are needed. A few Centers utilize both of these staffing arrangements, often as a means of increasing the provision of customer

service during peak hours in the Resource Room. Beyond handling peak loads, other factors influencing staffing arrangements in the Resource Room include the amount of customer traffic, available funding for services for universal customers, and partnership agreements between One-Stop partner agencies.

Examples of the different approaches to providing staff assistance in the Resource Room are described below.

- Customer Service Representatives may work in the Resource Room on a full-time basis.
 - In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center has four full-time customer service representatives at the Help Desk, as well as a supervisor to assist customers in the Resource Room. There are also two full-time staff members working in the Career Discovery Center, a separate room with self-service resources for youth customers. Additional staff members work in other areas of the self-service system on a full-time basis.
 - In *Boston, Massachusetts*, The Work Place (TWP) has three staff members who work in the Resource Library on a rotating basis. At least one staff member is working in the Resource Library at any given time, and during peak times TWP has two staff members available to assist customers. TWP has a diverse, multilingual staff, with staff members that speak Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. When these staff members are not working in the Resource Library they are often facilitating workshops for universal customers.
 - In *Renton, Washington*, the Career Development Center (CDC) has a customer service team composed of five line staff and one supervisor. Three staff members greet customers, assist customers in the Resource Library, and provide administrative support to the CDC. In addition, two computer support staff maintain the computer network servers and assist customers in the computer areas.
- Staff members from different specialized programs may be available on a part-time or as-needed basis.

Staff are assigned to the Resource Room either full-time or on an as-needed basis.

Several Centers have arranged for program counselors to assist customers from targeted population groups in using self-service resources, such as participants in welfare-to-work programs or individuals with disabilities.

- At the Career Resources Center in *Morrisville, Vermont*, nine counselors from different programs have offices in cubicles that cluster around the exterior of the Resource Room. These staff members frequently escort program participants to the Resource Room and assist them in using self-service tools and resources. In addition, these counselors are available on an as-needed basis to assist universal customers in the Resource Room.
- At the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in *Austin, Texas*, staff members from five different programs each work in the Resource Room ten hours every week to augment the services provided by two full-time Resource Technicians and a half-time Green Thumb employee.
- In *Renton, Washington*, a counselor from IAM CARES, an organization providing rehabilitation services, works at the CDC full-time and frequently assists customers with disabilities in using self-service resources.
- Off-site staff members from partner agencies may be available “on-call” or by appointment. This arrangement is frequently used to provide individualized assistance to customers with disabilities.
 - At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota*, staff members from Social Services for the Blind (SSB) are available to meet with customers on an “on-call” or referral basis. SSB is one of the partners in the Center and its offices are located in downtown Minneapolis, approximately 25 miles from Anoka.
 - In *Bloomington, Indiana*, counselors from Vocational Rehabilitation are available to assist customers at the Workforce Development Center on an “on-call” basis.

STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

One-Stop staff have a variety of different roles and responsibilities in a self-service environment. In general, those Centers offering a broad array of mechanisms to orient customers to self-services—workshops, orientation tours, print materials, individualized staff assistance—devote a significant amount of staff resources to provide customer service in self-service areas. Across the eight sites included in this study, the different roles and responsibilities of staff members in a self-service environment included the following:

- Conducting intake and reception activities
- Providing customers with an orientation to the Resource Room
- Providing customers with individualized assistance in the Resource Room
- Developing workshop curricula and local resources
- Facilitating workshops on self-services
- Organizing and maintaining self-service resources
- Providing vocational counseling.

Staff provide a variety of functions, including acting as greeters, conducting orientation, facilitating workshops, and conducting assessments.

Conducting intake and reception activities. All of the Centers in this study have arranged for staff members to conduct intake and reception activities. These staff members—sometimes referred to as “greeters” or “receptionists”—typically welcome customers, provide basic information about the One-Stop Center, and often give new customers a brief tour of the Resource Room. Another common responsibility of greeters or receptionists is ensuring that customers sign-in using a hard-copy or computer registry.

- In *Morrisville, Vermont*, the receptionist at the Career Resource Center greets customers and distributes an orientation packet to new customers that contains a variety of brochures and information about the One-Stop Center.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, three registration kiosks near the entrance to the Workforce Development Center provide basic information about the Center’s services and resources. Customers can also register for services and obtain basic information about the Center from a greeter working at the reception desk.
- In *Anoka, Minnesota*, a “Greeter’s Desk,” located near the entrance to the Resource Center, is staffed at

all times by one of two part-time greeters. The greeters—generally the first staff members to welcome customers to the Center—provide new customers with an orientation tour of the Resource Center and simultaneously gather basic information on new customers using a checklist. This information helps the greeter or other Center staff determine whether a customer should be referred to a particular program for specialized services.

First-time users need an orientation or overview of tools available in the Resource Room.

Providing customers with an orientation to the Resource

Room. As discussed in the chapter on “Facilitating Access to Self-Services,” most Centers provide new customers with an orientation to the array of self-service tools and resources available at the Center, either in a group or individualized setting. Orientation sessions may be facilitated by a greeter, customer service specialist, or a program counselor.

- In *Austin, Texas*, staff at the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) indicated that, while the initial one-on-one tour and orientation for new customers is rather time consuming, it provides staff with a valuable opportunity to become acquainted with customers and direct them to particular services at the Center or in the community. This individualized tour is provided by one of the two full-time Resource Technicians in the Resource Room or a program staff member working in the Resource Room.
- The Melbourne Job Link Center in *Brevard County, Florida*, offers a weekly orientation workshop once a week. The workshop, which lasts about two and a half hours, includes an in-depth tour of the Resource Area, an overview of the state’s Jobs and Information System, and a review of specialized programs accessible through the Center.

In some Centers, staff rove around the Resource Room, providing help as needed.

Providing customers with individualized assistance in the

Resource Room. All of the Centers in this study have instituted mechanisms to provide customers in the Resource Room with individualized assistance. One-Stop staff members may assist customers in the Resource Room on a full-time, part-time, or as-needed basis. Centers that provide customer service on a full-time basis often have staff members positioned at a “Help Desk.” In some cases, customer service representatives are quite proactive, roving around the Resource Room asking customers whether they would like assistance. At other Centers, customers must request assistance from a

staff member. Centers that lack clear, written guidelines for using self-service resources may experience an especially strong need to provide customers with individualized assistance.

Developing workshop curricula and local resources.

Designing and developing mechanisms to teach customers how to use self-service tools and resources, such as through workshops and print materials, also requires a significant amount of staff time. For example, as we discuss in Chapter III, several Centers have developed workshops that focus on using particular self-service resources, such as job searching on the Internet or preparing a resume using a computer program. Additional types of orientation materials developed by One-Stop staff members include informational flyers and instructional handouts describing specific self-service programs and features. This work may be conducted by Resource Room customer service staff or by counselors from specialized programs.

In some cases, local One-Stop systems have allocated staff time to develop their own self-service resources, such as a local talent bank. During the time of our site visits, for example, a few Centers were in the process of developing an Internet web page for the One-Stop Center. Below we describe some of the workshops and local resources developed by staff members at the Centers in this study.

- The Career Development Center (CDC) in *Renton, Washington* has developed print materials that facilitate access to self-services, such as an annotated bibliography of helpful Internet web sites. The CDC has also developed curricula for workshops on the Internet, resume preparation, labor market information, and the state's JobNet system.
- In *Brevard County, Florida*, the Job Link system has created a resource called the Workforce Organizer that provides step-by-step directions on how to access all software programs and Internet websites.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, The Workforce Development Center (WDC) is currently developing a computer database system called "YouthNet," which would provide young people with information about paid employment opportunities, community service opportunities, youth-serving organizations in the community, and community events for youth. The WDC anticipates that ultimately this system would be accessible via the Internet.

The need to provide individualized staff assistance can be minimized when Centers provide clear, written guidance for using Resource Room materials.

Most Centers conduct a variety of workshops open to the universal customer. Developing and conducting these workshops becomes an important staff function.

The CDC in Renton has developed an annotated list of helpful Internet sites. A copy is included in Appendix D.

- At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota*, a regional labor market information analyst, co-located at the Center on a full-time basis, has undertaken efforts to improve access to LMI for customers and staff members of the Center. The LMI liaison has offered workshops for staff members to discuss the importance and relevance of LMI for job seekers. The liaison also assists staff with incorporating LMI, particularly local LMI, in customer workshops on career exploration and job search strategies. Finally, the liaison has also created a “Hot Jobs” bulletin, which features a growing occupation, along with its wages, prospects, and skills and training requirements.

Facilitating workshops on self-services. Several One-Stop Centers offer workshops that provide customers with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of self-service resources, such as computer software for resume writing or career exploration and self-assessment. As Centers develop workshops for universal customers they must concurrently determine which staff members should facilitate these workshops. At the Centers we visited for this study, workshops were generally facilitated by Resource Room staff or by program counselors co-located at the One-Stop Center on a full-time basis.

- The Career Development Center (CDC) in *Renton, Washington* offers an Internet workshop twice each week. This workshop is facilitated by one of the two computer support staff who work in the self-service computer areas. The CDC offers several other workshops for universal customers pertaining to self-services, some of which are facilitated by counselors from specialized programs who work at the CDC on a full-time or part-time basis.
- The Work Place (TWP) in *Boston, Massachusetts* offers a wide variety of workshops pertaining to self-service tools and resources, including a basic introduction to using a computer, using the Internet, and preparing a resume. These workshops are facilitated by staff members working in the Resource Library or by counselors who primarily work with customers on an individualized basis.

Organizing and maintaining hard-copy and electronic resources are additional staff functions that Resource Rooms must plan for.

Organizing and maintaining self-service resources. Another significant responsibility for staff members in a self-service environment involves organizing and maintaining hard-copy and electronic tools and resources. For example, materials in the Resource

Room library—books, periodicals, videos, catalogs—must be grouped by category and clearly identified with appropriate signage. A more labor-intensive task entails maintaining the computer hardware and software programs at the One-Stop Center.

- At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota*, the Resource Technician has developed several systems to facilitate access to self-service resources. Bookshelves with hard-copy information include framed signs above each section indicating the resource subject. In addition, the Resource Technician maintains a “book inventory” with the author and title of each publication and its location within the Center.
- In *Brevard County, Florida*, a Consortium Resource Specialist maintains the hard-copy materials and videos available at each of the nine sites in the county’s Job Link system. This staff person is sometimes available to assist customers with finding appropriate resource materials.
- At the Workforce Development Center (WDC) in *Racine, Wisconsin*, technical support for the computer hardware and software and the network server is provided by a team of about six employees. However, these staff members provide technical support for both the WDC and the Racine County Human Services Department.

Vocational counseling. A couple of Centers provide vocational counseling as a service available to universal customers, at little or no cost.

- In *Racine, Wisconsin* the Workforce Development Center has a separate room located at the far end of the Resource Room called the Career Development Area (CDA), which contains a variety of resources on assessment and career exploration. Two vocational counselors have offices in the CDA and are available full-time to meet with universal customers on an individual basis and to administer assessment tools. Customers can make an appointment to meet with a vocational counselor by using the registration kiosk or inquiring with the receptionist.
- In *Bloomington, Indiana* counselors at the Workforce Development Center administer the CAPS/COPS/COPES assessment each Tuesday to universal customers that are interested in this resource.

Some Resource Rooms offer individual or group vocational assessment, available to the universal customer. Thus, counseling is an additional staff function.

Examples of Staffing Arrangements in the Resource Room

At the *Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in Austin, Texas*, Center management views staffing as a crucial aspect of operations. For this reason, in addition to two full-time “resource technicians” and a half-time Green Thumb receptionist, staff from each partnering program work in the Resource Center ten hours each week. In addition, a staff person from Goodwill Industries also works in the Resource Center sixteen hours a week. Resource technicians ensure that electronic information systems are operating properly, and update binders, the job board, and computer job listings. All staff conduct orientations and tours, and assist Resource Center users with registration and job matching and the range of self-services available at the Center.

The *Career Development Center (CDC) in Renton, Washington* ensures that customers using self-services can easily access staff assistance. The CDC has a customer services team composed of five line staff and one supervisor. Three staff members are responsible for greeting customers, assisting customers in the Resource library, and providing administrative support to all CDC staff. In addition, two computer support staff maintain the computer network servers and provide assistance to customers in the computer areas. The workstation for these two staff members has windows that look out into the Resource library and all three computer areas (computer lab, classroom, and Internet room). This design ensures that staff members are readily accessible for customer assistance and allows staff to easily monitor the self-service areas.

BUILDING STAFF CAPACITY

The self-service infrastructure in One-Stop Centers generates a need for staff training in a variety of different respects. First, training is often required to ensure that staff members possess the necessary computer skills to assist customers with electronic self-service resources. Second, Centers offering adaptive equipment to facilitate access among individuals with disabilities must train staff members on using assistive technology. Third, staff members may be called upon to develop new skills, such as facilitating workshops for universal customers. Finally, promoting a culture of customer service within the One-Stop Center typically requires training and team-building activities, particularly when staff working in the Resource Room represent a number of different partner agencies—each with its own

The variety of staff roles in the Resource Room gives rise to the need for building staff capacity.

identity and work culture.

One-Stop Centers in this study emphasized that the need for staff training is continuous. Staff members providing customer service in the Resource Room must keep abreast of new and revised computer programs that draw upon the latest advancements in information technology. Several states, for example, are developing new or expanded database systems that link information in four different areas: (1) career exploration, (2) self-assessment, (3) labor market information, and (4) information on education and training providers. Although these systems are usually designed to be fairly “user-friendly,” staff may need special training around how to manage the “cross-walks” that link the different types of information.

The need for staff training is continuous.

In addition to ensuring that Resource Room staff receive proper training on new computer programs, One-Stop systems have also attempted to provide opportunities for staff from specific programs, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Welfare-to-Work, and JTPA programs, to receive training on self-services. Program staff can play a critical role in encouraging and assisting participants to use self-service resources, as we discussed in Chapter III.

Across the eight Centers in this study, One-Stop staff working in self-service areas participated in training activities in the following areas:

- *Providing Customer Service.* One of the key themes of One-Stop system-building is to provide a seamless service-delivery system characterized by high-quality customer service. To promote this goal, some One-Stop systems have arranged for staff members to participate in training sessions related to providing customer service. For example, staff members working in the Resource Room might participate in team-building training, particularly if these staff members represent different partner agencies. In some cases, training on providing customer service may focus on assisting individuals from certain population groups, such as persons with disabilities.
 - At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota*, staff members have participated in cross-training sessions as a means of learning about the programs and services available through One-Stop partner agencies. In addition, the Center has taken advantage of

training offered through the Training and Learning Office (TRLO) in Minneapolis, including training on customer service. The TRLO is a local training office for the Minnesota Department of Economic Security.

- At the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in *Austin, Texas*, staff members participated in a training session focused on providing customer service to individuals with disabilities. A representative from Disability Services at the Texas Workforce Commission held a series of meetings at the local level to increase awareness of resources for job seekers with disabilities.
- *Presentation Skills.* Several Centers have asked staff members to facilitate workshops on self-services or other topics, which may represent a new role for One-Stop staff members. As a result, some Centers have arranged for training sessions on presentation skills.
 - The Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* contracted with a local community college to provide “train-the-trainer” workshops for One-Stop staff members on large-group presentation skills.
- *Computer Skills.* In order to assist customers in using the wide array of electronic self-service resources, One-Stop staff members, particularly those individuals working in the Resource Room, often need computer training.
 - When the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) in *Austin, Texas* first opened, the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) provided training on using the different SOICC software programs that would be available at the Center.
 - In *Brevard County, Florida*, staff members at the Melbourne Job Link Center participated in technical and computer training offered by the Brevard County Community College. This training included sessions on using the state’s labor market information system, the *Choices* career exploration program, Microsoft Office, and the state’s Job Information System.
- *Operating Assistive Technology Equipment.* As One-Stop Centers acquire special adaptive equipment enabling individuals with disabilities to access self-

Staff training has consisted of team building, familiarizing staff with computer hardware and software, and teaching them about assistive technology.

services, staff members working in the Resource Room must receive training on using assistive technology.

- As discussed in Chapter III, all twelve Career Resource Centers in Vermont received adaptive technology equipment as part of a statewide effort. Once adaptive equipment had been installed at the Center in *Morrisville, Vermont*, staff members received training on using the equipment from the Vermont Assistive Technology Project.

CHALLENGES TO BUILDING STAFF CAPACITY

The One-Stop Centers in this study experienced a variety of challenges with respect to enhancing staff capacity in a self-service environment. Providing enough staff members in the Resource Room to assist customers is a significant challenge for some Centers. Centers also have difficulty providing sufficient opportunities for staff training. In this section we discuss some of these challenges and highlight some of the strategies Centers in this study have used to address them.

Limited funding for services for universal customers. Many Centers have struggled with maintaining adequate staffing arrangements in the Resource Room due to limited funding to serve universal customers. At some Centers there may be few or no staff in the Resource Room, whose primary responsibilities are assisting customers. (However, as a result of the Workforce Investment Act, Centers may acquire greater resources and flexibility in providing services for universal customers.)

- In *Austin, Texas*, the Capitol of Texas Workforce Center (South) supplements the two full-time Resource Technicians working in the Resource Room by having staff from One-Stop partner agencies work in the Resource Room on a part-time basis. Each day, three staff members from different programs provide customer service in the Resource Room. Staff members from five different programs—Food Stamps Employment and Training, JTPA, Employment Services, Veterans and TANF—are required to work in the Resource Room for ten hours each week.

Ongoing need for staff training. Centers in this study emphasized that they experience a continuous need to train staff on self-services, as well as other One-Stop resources. In some cases, the ongoing need for staff training arises from a high degree of staff

Challenges in building staff capacity include the need for providing on-going training, dealing with staff turnover, and promoting a common customer-oriented approach to services.

turnover at the Center, which sometimes occurs as a result of system restructuring. New staff members, particularly those working in the Resource Room, must acquire the necessary skills to assist customers with self-service resources. In addition, due to advancements in technology, the array of electronic self-service tools and resources available at many One-Stop Centers is quite broad. As new types of electronic self-services become available, staff members must learn how to operate them in order to provide customer service.

- The Career Development Center in *Renton, Washington* has instituted a staff training system, called the *CDC Passport*, to help integrate staff from various partner agencies and promote a seamless service delivery system. While this cross training includes self-services and technology issues, the Passport “destinations” also include workshops and materials that help staff learn about all programs and services offered through the CDC.
- At the time of our site visit, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) in *Brevard County, Florida* was developing a training curriculum—the Ambassador training system—to help train staff members who will assist the general public in any of the Job Link system’s nine sites. Staff members will receive training in the services available at Job Link Centers, including training on computer systems. Brevard County also encourages staff members in the Job Link system to take advantage of free courses offered through Brevard County Community College, the fiscal agent for the One-Stop partnership.
- In *Racine, Wisconsin*, the Workforce Development Center conducts in-service training, which is open to all staff members, whenever new self-service resources become available at the Center.

Promoting a culture of customer service. Some Centers indicated that one of the biggest challenges they have encountered with respect to staffing arrangements in a self-service environment concerns promoting a culture of customer service in the Resource Room. This may be particularly challenging when the team of staff members working in the Resource Room represents a number of different partner agencies, each with its own norms and work culture. Moreover, the sense of teamwork and coordination among staff members suffers when Centers experience high staff turnover.

- The Workforce Development Center (WDC) in *Racine, Wisconsin* has instituted several mechanisms to promote a sense of unity among staff and a commitment to customer service. The WDC has created functional teams to promote team-building and communication across staff members performing similar functions. The Resource Room functional team meets regularly, and like other functional teams, minutes from team meetings are posted in public folders on the WDC's computer network. In addition, although several different agencies are represented at the Center, each staff member receives a set of business cards with the WDC's logo.
- Several Centers have held retreats for all staff of the One-Stop Center. For example, the Career Development Center (CDC) in *Renton, Washington* held a one-day staff retreat to promote team building and increase knowledge about different programs and agencies represented at the CDC.
- As mentioned above, staff members at the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* have participated in training on customer service.

Meeting the needs of a diverse customer base. Staff members working in the Resource Room play a critical role in directing customers to appropriate self-services, and also to additional resources available within the One-Stop Center or in the community, particularly to resources that might enhance their ability to access self-service tools and resources. Because of the varied needs of One-Stop customers—who range from dislocated workers with substantial skills to individuals with limited education and work experience—meeting the needs of such a diverse group of customers represents a major challenge for staff members. Ideally, staff members are prepared to respond to a variety of different issues, such as referring customers to courses on basic computer skills, or assisting customers with disabilities in using adaptive equipment.

Ensuring that staff can meet the needs of a very diverse customer base is also a significant challenge.

- At the Workforce Center in *Anoka, Minnesota* several partner agencies have staff members co-located at the Center, and many other human service agencies have a presence in the building. Staff members in the Resource Center frequently refer customers to resources in the Center or the Human Service building. Greeters in the Resource Center familiarize new customers with resources at the Center, and also gather information about the individual's needs and

reasons for visiting the Resource Center using a checklist. This checklist helps the Greeter determine whether a customer should be referred to a program counselor or another resource located in the building, such as the adult education center.

- The Workforce Development Center (WDC) in *Racine, Wisconsin* has created a WDC newsletter to keep staff members informed of recent developments and major issues at the Center. Moreover, an “intra-net” network system facilitates e-mail communication between staff members at the WDC. For example, whenever the employer services team has arranged for employer recruiting sessions at the WDC, all staff members receive a notification via e-mail.
- Staff training systems, such as the “CDC Passport” system in *Renton, Washington* and the “Ambassador training program” in *Brevard County, Florida*, both of which are discussed above, also help ensure that One-Stop staff members are aware of different programs and resources accessible through the Center.

Examples of Providing Staff Training

At the *Workforce Development Center in Racine, Wisconsin*, breaking down the “old agency cultures” and the old way of doing things and moving towards a cohesive, customer-oriented approach was identified as an important goal. Towards accomplishing this goal, WDC has created a Resource Room “functional team” to promote team-building. The team meets regularly to discuss strategies for improving customer services. Staff members also participated in a retreat at a nearby conference facility, again as part of the effort to instill a cohesive vision and promote a sense of common purpose. Finally, the WDC prepares a newsletter disseminated to staff, for purposes of improving communication and coordination.